

Five Ways to Develop a Heart After God

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. Please turn in your Bibles to 2 Samuel. 2 Samuel. If you are new or visiting, welcome. My name is BK. I have the pleasure of serving here as one of our pastors here at SBC.

As you know, I've been away for a few weeks, thanks to the fever, pneumonia, and the rest of the stuff that has been going on around.

If you are desperate and want to lose 10 pounds, come and talk to me really close. I'll see what I can do to help you. I had to go a few more extra notches on the belt this morning. So I'm still not 100%, but my thanks to you for your prayers and support. And as Kathy Oranger reminded me this morning, the older you get, the longer it takes to recover.

So it's been a little bit of a bear. So please excuse me. I'll probably be using some fisherman friends and some other things to keep the pathways open.

Before I go any further, just let me pray. We're getting into, it's kind of part two to a sermon series on Saul and David, the first two kings of Israel.

[1 : 24] Last time I preached, I shared with you some foolproof advice on how to shipwreck your faith. How to take a faith that is strong and how to destroy it. How to be like Saul who was chosen by God, anointed by God, blessed by God, gifted by God, and completely throw that all away.

Today we're going to look at the contrasting life to that in David. So before I go any further, let's just, let's pray. Dear Holy Heavenly Father, we just thank you.

Lord, I'm just praying for strength, not just strength in my voice, but just strength in my body for this sermon, O Lord. God, I pray that you would, I pray that this message would be clear.

I pray that it would be understood. I pray for your spirit to use it the way it intends to use this sermon. I pray for every family here. I pray for the bodies that are a little bit weary.

I know that there's several families just fighting off these colds, these flus, these fevers, these pneumonias, O God. But I pray, even I notice, just even in the downtime, how easy it is to become a little bit forlorn, a little bit depressed, a little bit sad, just how the body affects the spirit.

[2 : 53] And I pray that it would not be so. I pray that you would give us strength. I pray that you'd give us clear minds, clear hearts that desire, and as we talk about today, hearts that long for you.

So, Father, we thank you for the good news of your Bible, the good news of Jesus Christ. We ask these things in your most holy and precious name. Amen.

So, this morning, as many of you all know, David is defined as a man after a heart of God, after the heart of God.

I want to define what that term means. And I want to give us five ways to help us cultivate a heart after God.

I know in your bulletin, I've been playing with the title, but it all comes down to how do we strengthen our faith to have a heart that longs for and desires after God and the things of God.

[4 : 06] My hope and prayer for you that if your faith is new, I'm really hoping that this sermon will help you understand what it is to grow in the Christian faith.

Perhaps your faith is not new, but you have been struggling through different various aspects of life and you want to avoid a King Saul situation, then I pray that this sermon is for you.

However, who this sermon is truly meant for is perhaps one whose faith has been lived more like Saul than it has been David.

Perhaps you have been living more like Saul. Perhaps you have been living more like Saul.

Perhaps you have made choices in your life. You have pursued certain aspects of life that have left to more of a shipwreck than a tall, standing, enduring faith.

And we're going to be learning a little bit about this next week. We're going to look at the Davidic covenant. But what's going to happen is through Saul unites them. David expands the nation, gets rid of the warring nations that come against them.

And then Solomon is going to expand through wisdom that kingdom. And that's going to be the end of Act 1 as Israel obeyed and followed after God.

So God gives them Saul, a man who was anointed by God. Saul starts well. He leads well. He wins great victories. But instead, after following after God, he begins to follow his own wisdom.

[11:00] We see partial obedience. We see impatience. And then finally, we see direct disobedience of God. Till we finally read a passage that he finds himself so far out from God that he does not hear his voice, he starts to seek mediums to inform him of what God's will is.

God's favor for him is lost. And at the very end of 1 Samuel, Saul goes to war. He loses three of his sons in a great battle.

And he takes his own life. A life that is truly a massive shipwreck. So as we turn the page to 2 Samuel, we find a country that is in the midst of a civil war.

There are those that still want to see an heir to Saul to sit on the throne. And there are those who know that David, who's now been anointed by God to be the king of Israel, fighting for position.

So let me just read from you from 1 Samuel 13. This is when Saul disobeyed God. God told him, So we start to see a distinguishing characteristic.

[12:47] A heart after God is one who does what God commands him. In 1 Samuel 16.7, Samuel the prophet is before Jesse, because he's told that one of Jesse's sons will be the king.

And he starts with the oldest, and he starts to question, is it really going to be the youngest? This one named David. And it says, But the Lord said to Samuel, Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him.

For the Lord sees not as man sees. Man looks on the outward appearance. And remember, Saul was a mighty man. He was a head, shoulders above everybody else.

He was notably good looking. He looked like a man's man. But we see here, But the Lord looks on the heart. And then in the New Testament, Luke reminds us, In Luke, in Acts 13.22, it says, But when he, God, had removed Saul, God raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, I have found in David, the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who will do all my will.

So the question that I want to answer for you is, What does it mean to be a man or a woman after God's heart? The reason I need to answer this is, there's a lot of confusion over this.

[14:19] First, let me tell you what it doesn't mean. First, God chose David, not because he had a pure heart, but because he had a heart after God.

You understand the difference there? God didn't look down and found a man who had a perfect, pure heart, and so chose him to be the king. David wasn't chosen because he was naturally good, because the Bible is quite clear that there is nobody that is naturally good.

In fact, Jeremiah 17.9 says that our hearts are deceitful above all things and desperately sick. Who can understand it? The fact of the matter is, there is no pure heart.

As many times as we might think, we are acting with real, pure, intentional motives. We are not. So often we want to say, Well, I was thinking the best.

I was doing the best. My intentions were pure. And we may actually believe that. And I believe that sometimes King Saul thought his intentions were best as well.

[15:30] But the reality is, our hearts are easily swayed. Our hearts are easily blown off course. And here's the fact. We don't always know what our intentions are.

Do you know that? We do not always know what our intentions are. Truth be told, as I get older, and some of you may identify with this, you start to understand that our motivations are sometimes more corrupt than we'd like to admit.

We have different influences. You know, psychologically, how you behave differs whether you're the firstborn or the lastborn of your family.

How you behave, do you come from a family that is, your parents are still married? Or do you come from a family where your parents have split? Those are all influences on how you think, how you process, and how you see life.

Sometimes we all have a desire to be loved, a desire to be respected, a desire to be cared for. And we will act in such a way to get those things to become, and they can become idols for us.

[16:53] And even though we think they are good, they're not. An interesting thing, I was just thinking about where I grew up. I grew up on the outside of my town.

And because I was out in the country, it was about 20 miles outside of the city, I was designated for a high school that was in the rougher part of town. It was kind of where a lot of the single families were.

And the school was big into trades. It was a little bit rougher. You had to learn to mind your manners. A lot of rough kids who grew up with homes where there was alcoholic fathers. A little bit tougher breed of kids. So you had to act differently. In the second part of my high school year, I went to a different school as we moved. And that school had the French Immersion Program. And if you're in their 50s, you knew that everybody thought French Immersion was the only way that was going to save you and lead you to life of riches. So all the school was filled with doctors' kids, lawyers' kids, a lot of higher educational kids.

[17:56] And what was interesting, at the second school, to not go to university would be social suicide. That's the way I grew up. You couldn't say I was thinking about a trade.

No matter how good, that'd be social suicide. Because at that school, do you understand what I'm getting at? Those were outside influences that are affecting a 13, 14, 15, 16, 17-year-old kid making life choices.

You think you're independent, but you're not. So my point is, there are so many things that influence us that oftentimes we think it's our heart, but it's so much more that's going on.

So God did not choose David because he had a pure heart. Nobody has a pure heart. Two, a heart after God doesn't mean having a heart that doesn't sin.

We know the story of David. He did sin. His life demonstrated what happens when you pursue the lust of your affections.

[19:07] Three, the third lie is that what it doesn't mean to have a heart after God is that you always feel close to God. The reality is people often assume that if you have a heart after God, you will always feel spiritually strong.

You will always feel that you are full of joy. You will always feel that you are connected to God. But anybody who has read the Psalms of David, the Psalms of Lament, will understand that there is times, even a man after God's heart asks the question, God, where are you?

I long for you. I thirst for you. I am parched. I am weary. If you read the biographies of many of the great Christian men and women, a lot of them struggled with deep spiritual lows, spiritual depression and struggles.

And here's the truth. It's okay. It's okay. To struggle with those things of life does not mean you are far from God.

It does not mean that you no longer have a heart that longs for God. And the fourth lie that is perpetrated, so a lot of people believe that a heart after God is an emotional passion rather than an obedience that follows after God.

[20:39] Another way of saying it, it has more to do with how I feel rather than what I do. Some people believe that true worship is about intense emotional worship, whether it be crying in church, singing loudly, or having these strong, intense religious feelings.

But we will see throughout Scripture that while passion is important, obedience is the defining mark of a heart after God. Notice in Acts 13.22, God said, I want a man after God's own heart who will do all of my will.

It's not someone who's going to feel positively about me my whole life, but who's going to do my whole will. And I know this gets crowded in some people's thinking.

And I think I've shared the example. I've got a friend, her parents divorce, and the mother desired a more passionate, intense spiritual relationship.

So left her husband and five kids to pursue that with another man at a more type of charismatic church. Whereas the father stayed home and obediently raised his five kids.

[21:50] But I remember her thinking was her mom was the spiritual one. And we as friends had to tell her, no, no, no, your dad was the spiritual one. Your dad was the one who chose to obey the Lord.

So those are the four things that it's not, right? It doesn't mean you have a pure heart. It doesn't mean that you're never going to sin.

It doesn't mean that you're not going to feel close to God. It doesn't mean that you're going to always feel this emotional euphoria. You see, a heart after God isn't about perfection.

It is about direction. A heart after God is not about perfection. It is about direction. Jonathan Edwards actually writes a great book.

If you're not familiar with Jonathan Edwards, some call him America's greatest theologian in the late 1700s, tells us that he argues that true religion primarily consists of holy affections, meaning that genuine faith is not merely intellectual assent or outward conformity, but is marked by a transformed heart.

[23 : 02] he makes five points. One, he says, religious affections are essential to true faith.

Religious affections are essential to true, true faith. He contends that having no religious affections at all is a sign of a spiritually dead heart.

God. He contrasts this with a cold, purely rational faith that lacks passion for God. At the heart of hearts, we have to have an affection for God.

We have to love God. And I'm going to explain that in a little bit what that means. Number two, he says, it has to be more than emotionalism. He says, while affections evoke emotions, they are not just fleeting feelings.

Instead, they are deep, enduring inclinations of the soul towards God shaped by the Holy Spirit. It's a longing even in your sin, you want to be close to God.

[24 : 03] Even in your lostness, you want to be close to God. Three, and I believe this is one of the most important points, is that the affections, a heart after God, must be rooted in truth.

That true religious affections arise from a right understanding of God's character, a right understanding of God's word, and a right understanding of God's works.

False affections may come from excitement, external influence, or self-interest rather than a love for God. As a pastor, I see this over and over.

I will meet new people, come to church, we'll sit down, we'll have a coffee, go for lunch, and I'll tell them, tell me about your story about God. And it will start with a story about this, I just feel God's love, I have these affections that have influenced me.

But very little is there an admittance that I was lost and now I'm found. I was blind and now I see. There's an intensity towards the emotions rather than the truth where I was a sinner headed for hell and now I'm a saint headed for heaven.

[25 : 14] And because of that I have a love for Jesus. There's a difference in those stories. The fourth truth he says that religious affections have to transform a person's life.

Genuine religious affections result in real observable changes in how a person lives. true love for God will be evident in obedience, humility, and perseverance in the faith.

And number five, religious affections are always produced by the Holy Spirit. So what are the truths that drive our affections?

And I've already stated them. Dave Nannery read a key passage to us out of Isaiah 61. But right now I have for you Luke 4 18.

This is when Jesus Christ before his home synagogue gets up and he reads the scroll and he says the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

[26 : 20] He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind to set at liberty those who are oppressed to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

My friends if you're asking here what are the truths that are supposed to move my heart these are them. These are the truths that are meant to move our heart.

You see the Bible tells us that we were slaves to sin that we were enemies of God. We were not friends of God and then recognized we were friends of God.

No the Bible describes us as being a people that were lost blind captive and that Jesus Christ comes in and he unlocks our jail. He frees us of our shackles.

He removes the scales from our eyes and we see the truth. The fact is we need good news. We need liberty. We need to see. We need his freedom.

[27 : 18] And when we understand that guess what develops? Religious affections. when you truly understand these truths you're beginning to see what it means to love God.

If we don't it often means we really don't believe that we were poor. It means we don't really believe we were captive.

We really don't believe we were blind. We really don't believe we were oppressed. oppressed. But somehow we were able to work ourselves out of our mess, see God in our own power, and then worship him.

You see a heart after God's own heart is a heartfelt disposition. It is a direction that means we're moving towards God because we love him. So how do we develop this heart that seeks after Christ's righteousness?

And I'm going to give you five examples from the books of 1 and 2 Samuel. The first way is a heart after God. Trust God's timing and trust God's sovereignty.

[28 : 35] Remember those examples that I gave you about where you grew up, whether you were first born, if you were last born, whether you grew up, went to a school from the country, or you moved downtown and went to another.

Guess who's sovereign over all those things? God, amen? God is all a part of our story, whether you realize it or not. He's the one who's writing our story.

He's orchestrating our stories. Now, my experience is that most Christians get pushed off the path of righteousness into the path of shipwreckedness because they don't want to trust God's timing.

They do not want to trust God's sovereignty. Why? Because it's tough. it's tough. In 1 Samuel, we read that David was anointed to be king, and he had to wait seven years running in the wilderness from Saul.

And then he rules from Judah for another seven years before he ever enters into Jerusalem. But yet he knew, he understood that he was to be king.

[29 : 46] And here's the thing. While David was running, the text tells us that there was multiple times that David was able to take Saul's life.

The first is he's in a cave. He's hiding in this cave and Saul's hiding with him in 1 Samuel 24 and Saul actually goes into the cave to relieve himself.

And David's able to sneak up behind him and David ends up actually cutting off a piece of his robe. Like he could have just ended it right there. He could have taken what was rightfully his.

But the text actually tells us in 1 Samuel 24 5, it says, And afterwards David's heart struck him because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

He said to his men, The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my Lord. And he's talking about Saul, the Lord's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord's anointed.

[30 : 49] So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul. And Saul rose up and left the cave and went on his way. What it means is sometimes there's things in our life, challenges in our life, that don't seem right, but we have to trust that God has appointed them for a time.

God wants it to happen. In 1 Samuel 26, another example, David sneaks into Saul's camp, steals his water jug just to show that he was there.

to one of his men he says, do not destroy him, for who can put out his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?

Think about these things when we think about politics. Whether we think about provincial or national, what is God doing? I don't know, but God's ordaining it. Saul was the exact opposite.

Saul was impatient. He took matters into his own hands. In fact, he went and offered a sacrifice to the Lord, which only the priests were allowed to do. And that started the descent into him losing his kingdom.

[32 : 09] You see, a heart after God is a heart that demonstrates trust in God's sovereignty. A heart after God is one that resists the shortcuts. It doesn't try to force the outcomes.

A heart after God asks the question, am I willing to wait on God even when the wait feels long or unfair? That's number one.

Number two, a heart after God walks in humility and repentance. We know the story. David's men are at war.

He's at home, vacationing. He sees a beautiful woman on the rooftops. He invites her into his bed. She comes, he impregnates her.

Full of guilt, he tries to hide his sin. He invites this man to come home, trying to encourage him to sleep with his wife. His response is, the rest of the men are at war.

[33 : 10] How can I enjoy time with my wife when all my other fellow soldiers are not? So David, in his deep desire, in his deep shame, places this righteous man at the heat of the battle where he

struck and died.

Very few of us will ever have a sin such as that. Both adultery and murder all wrapped into one. However, when David is confronted by Nathan, the prophet, about his sin with Bathsheba, David confessed, I have sinned against the Lord.

You're right. When Nathan tells David that he, the son that he's impregnated with his wife will be lost, he accepts it and then goes on.

King Saul, as we understood from a sermon a couple of weeks ago, made excuses. The people wanted me to. The people were growing impatient. I had to do it.

Psalm 51 tells us David's heart, he says, have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

[34 : 38] For I know my transgression and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

Verse 10, created me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation. Uphold me with a willing heart. Psalm 51 reveals his brokenness and plea for restoration.

Now, one thing you should notice there, notice David isn't doing anything. I will work harder. I will do better. I won't walk on rooftops anymore.

He doesn't make those promises. He puts everything on God. God, you forgive me. You blot out my transgressions. Every single action is done by God and what God wills.

[35 : 46] See, a heart after God is a heart that understands that humility and repentance are the antidotes to pride and self-justification. Let me repeat that. A heart after God is a heart that understands that humility and repentance are the antidotes to pride and self-justification.

A heart after God owns his or her sins and turns to God for forgiveness. The question we need to ask ourselves is, do I confess my sins quickly and fully or do I make excuses?

The third way we grow a heart after God is a heart after God, trust God's plans. I'm going to get into some detail here and the passage that I'm going to read to you actually, it's quite an emotional one for me because I remember reading this passage when I was a young man and being struck by how great God is.

And I'm going to take you through it a little bit. If you start to read 2 Samuel, it starts off crazy. There's a civil war.

Saul has lost three of his sons. There's one remaining son. And Saul's men want this man to be the king. And there's this disarray and there's this war going on and this son's name is Ish-bosheth.

[37 : 22] Now Saul had a general named Abner and Abner was a very fierce, strong warrior and every time they would try to overtake him, Abner would get out and kill David's men.

Now finally, Abner makes peace with David and Abner swears allegiance to David. However, in that mayhem, David has a general named Joab who's a fiercely loyal man to David.

He's actually one of his nephews. So even though David has made peace with Abner, Joab goes in and kills Abner because Abner had killed Joab's brother.

brother. Okay? It just starts off that way. 2 Samuel actually starts off with a man bringing the head of King Saul to David and saying, hey, I killed King Saul.

Reward me. What does David do? He puts that man to death because he rose his sword against the anointed. So the guy's lying and David kills him, not because of the lie, because he claimed to kill God's anointed.

[38 : 29] So it starts off, even my wife was saying, this is like a bloodthirsty chapter. How do we make sense of this? But we do. So what's interesting is Ish-bosheth, that is Saul's last remaining son, when he loses Abner, his general, he loses heart.

He, oh no, what are we going to do? His two captains that are supposed to be loyal to him, kill him. And they bring his head to David.

Hey, look at this, because they had no faith in him anymore, they bring the head to David. What does David do? David kills them. He hangs them. Why?

Because they did an evil deed by killing Ish-bosheth. Even though he wanted the throne, you see, David is not responding by the way of the world.

David isn't doing these things for brutal revenge. David is doing these things to protect the name of the Lord. But this is where it gets really interesting, and it's a sad, tragic verse.

[39 : 41] 2 Samuel 4.4. Do we have that passage up? 2 Samuel 4.4. I can't remember if I brought it to Ryan. In the story, it said Jonathan. Now, remember Jonathan was David's best friend.

It was Saul's son. It said, Jonathan, the son of Saul, had a son who was crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel.

That means when Saul died in the battle, the other three sons died. This nurse understands that Saul has died, and she believes that David's going to come and kill this five-year-old boy so David can take over the throne.

Because why? Remember, Israel wanted a king like the other nations. That's the way man ruled. But David's not after man's own heart.

David is after God's own heart. But she doesn't know this, so she's running away, says she took him up and fled, and she fled in her haste. She falls, and he became lame.

[40 : 47] Just this tragic story, and his name is Mephibosheth. Why does that matter? Well, he's the son of Jonathan.

What she did not know is that when Saul tried to kill David, Jonathan knew that God was the anointed one.

And in 1 Samuel 18, we have this wonderful story of Jonathan and David. And it says, As soon as he, this is, Jonathan had finished speaking to Saul.

He knew that David's life was in danger. The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house.

Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as much as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David and his armor and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

[41 : 52] Jonathan was the favored son to be king. But Jonathan knew that God had called David, so he gives it to David. This is another great man.

So this is the relationship. So I'm going to take you now to 2 Samuel 9, 1 to 13. And I believe this is this powerful passage. It said, And David said, Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

Then David learns of his son, the crippled son, Mephibosheth. It said, And Mephibosheth, the son of Solomon, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage.

And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold, I am your servant. And David said to him, Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul, your father, and you shall eat at my table always.

Then the king called Ziba, the Saul's servant, and said to him, All that belonged to Saul and to all his house, I have given to your master's grandson.

[43 : 11] And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him, and shall bring in the produce that your master's grandson may have bread to eat.

But Mephibosheth, your master's grandson shall eat at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

Then Ziba said to the king, According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so will your servant do. So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons.

And Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mekah, and all who lived in Ziba's house became Mephibosheth's servants. So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, where he ate always at the king's table.

Now he was lame in both feet. This was a man who could not care for himself. Later on, if you remember, David is on the run from Absalom.

[44 : 15] That is, one of his sons wants to kill him. When they're defeated, Ziba, the servant, has now lost place. And he lies to David, and he tells them that Mephibosheth was actually waiting in Jerusalem, so if David died, he could become king.

This is a lie. But when David comes to Mephibosheth, Mephibosheth is unkept. And the reality is he can't keep up himself unless someone is there to do it.

But Mephibosheth says to David, I only cared for you. And we see in the text this great love and loyalty that this man had for David.

Why do I find this passage so moving? This was the man that was supposed to be the absolute enemy of David. Do you know what table you and I sit at when you become a child of God? You sit at the Lord's table. The Bible tells us, and I understood this as a kid, that God, that David would have his enemy son.

[45 : 32] Forever sitting at that table with him is exactly the same thing Jesus Christ does with us. When we who were backwards against him rebellious, and once we find Jesus Christ, when he directs him to his son, Jesus Christ, when we have been released, when we see, we now sit at that table.

We're not reminded of our sin. We're not reminded of who we are. We weren't reminded of we are an enemy. We were fully taken in as a child of God.

Amen? Those are the things that stir our religious affections. That is a love greater than any love that men know amongst ourselves.

That is a love born of God. You see, a heart that pursues after God doesn't get jealous like Saul's, or they try to celebrate.

A heart after God celebrates others, looks after the responsibility of those that they are loyal to. David celebrated Jonathan's loyalty and his success.

[46 : 42] And after becoming king, David honored Saul's legacy by showing kindness to Saul's grandson, Jonathan's son. You see, a heart that pursues the Lord as a heart that trusts God's plan for your life rather than comparing your life to others.

How easy is that for us to do, right? Didn't I serve? Didn't I do those things? How come I'm not as successful as that family? Why don't I have kids? Why are my kids rebellious?

And the fourth point is a heart after God seeks God's guidance in all decisions.

This is an easy one. Do you seek after God when you have a decision to make, whether big or small? Do you look to him? 1 Samuel 23, David knows that the Philistines are his enemies, but he still inquired after the Lord.

He says, Shall I go and attack the Philistines? And the Lord said to David, Go and attack the Philistines and save Keilah. But David's men said to them, Behold, we are afraid here in Judah.

[47 : 57] How much more than if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines? And David inquired of the Lord again. And the Lord answered him, Arise, go down to Keilah and I will give the Philistines into your hand.

And David and his men went to Keilah, fought with the Philistines and brought away their livestock and struck them with a great blow. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah. David's heart is contrasted with Saul's favor.

Saul rarely sought God's guidance and even consulted a witch when desperate. Throughout 1 and 2 Samuel, you will always find David asking God, Is this what I should do?

And his dependence on God ensured that he walked in alignment with his will. The question is easy for us. Is this your life?

Whether it be financial decisions, family decisions, do you seek after God? Do you submit your life to God's ways rather than mine?

[49 : 06] And the fifth way, finally here, is a heart after God endures trials with integrity. A heart after God endures trials with integrity.

We learned a couple of weeks ago that Saul's failures, that he always crumbled under pressure, turning to fear, rash decisions, and being influenced by the mob.

David faced years of hardship as a fugitive, even though he knew God had anointed him king. He waited for God to put him on the throne rather than himself.

He endured suffering, he endured being hunted, just think of the fear that was over them, even to find food during that time. And what's interesting, in 2 Samuel 1, 17, after Saul's death, David mourned him and honored him publicly.

You see, when we trust God's timing, when we walk in humility and repentance, when we trust God's plan and we seek God's guidance, these things give us the ability to endure the trials of life with integrity.

[50 : 24] without the murmuring, without the complaining, a heart after God knows that God is good, amen? And it's trusting that God has something good for us.

With David, those seven years in the wilderness served purpose. So let me conclude. This morning, we spent this time, examining the stark contrast between King Saul and King David.

Saul, as we know, is a man defined who started strong but shipwrecked his life because he trusted himself more than God. David, a man who, despite his great failures, lived a life marked by repentance, marked by trust and dependence on God.

God. Which leads us to one question. What example do we follow? Do we try to live like Saul, driven by pride and patience and self-reliance, or do we choose to live like David, humbled before God, trusting God's timing, repenting quickly and seeking God's will?

Well, here's the good news. No matter where you are today, whether like I said, your faith is new, your faith is old, your faith is strong, your faith is struggling, or you even think that your faith has been shipwrecked, God is still writing your story.

[52 : 03] Your life is not over. Maybe you feel like you failed too many times. Maybe you've made decisions you regret. Maybe you've been waiting for something and you're tempted to take control instead of trusting God.

Hear this. David's life proves that failure is never final when you don't turn your back on God. It's about turning your back to God.

One author writes, a faith that endures isn't never about failing, but it's always about returning. Amen? Because I'm going to tell you, you are going to fail.

So what's the next step? Well, for some of you, you need to repent and realign your heart with God. For some of you, you need to bow the knee to God.

You've heard about God, but you are resisting making him Lord. The reality is he is Lord. Scripture tells us that at the end of time, you will bow the knee to him. The reality is do you bow the knee as friend or foe?

[53 : 14] Do you need to trust his timing instead of forcing your own plan? Do you need to seek his wisdom before making decision or do you need to lay down the burden of past failures and receive the grace that God promises you?

God will have a choice. You have a choice. And some of you can make that choice today.

You can ask the Lord right here, right now. Lord, forgive me, I went my own way. For others, Lord, I've been going my own way and now I want to go your way.

But to do this work, you need to ask God for strength. You need to ask God for a changed heart. You need to ask God to empower you to believe in him. So this morning, I plead with you today, don't walk the path of Saul.

[54 : 22] choose the path of David. Choose to build a faith that endures like David, surrendering heart to God who never ever gives up on you.

Let's pray. Dear Holy Heavenly Father, there's a lot of words that were spoken this morning, but I pray that maybe there's just one or two of these words would resonate with our souls this day.

I know for me, just that as a young boy reading the story in my own little action Bible, telling me this story of David's kindness to his enemy's son, made me realize, even as a 10-year-old, that that's what God was doing to me.

He was inviting me in. I, who was an enemy, was now not only a friend, but a child of God, that I no longer needed to settle for the crumbs or to beg God for things.

I came to him as a, I come to him as a son, to his father who loves him. Father, some of us, we've never known that love here on earth.

[55 : 45] some of us have been rejected by our parents, rejected by our spouse or our friends, and we've never known what it is to be loved and cared for.

Father, we don't just find it in you, but we refined it in the reflection of you, which is called the church here today. That we come here as a family to be loved, to be known, to be understood, even in the complexity of our story.

Father, I pray if there's anyone here who needs to ask a question, that they would speak to me.

They would speak to Dave Nannery, who did introductions, or David Corente, who's here from Church of 99, or his elder Andy King, or Chris Mitchell, that's here.

We would all love to talk to you about the love of Jesus Christ. We want to tell you the story about how it changed our life, and how we know it can change your life.

So, Father, we call upon your power this morning. I praise you for the God that you are. I pray that you continue to raise and build those religious affections in us, knowing that we were once sinners lost, now we are sinners found, and in fact, we are no longer sinners, but saints and children of the King.

[57 : 24] I ask these things in your most holy and precious name. Amen. Amen.